

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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No. 7

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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A CHRISTMAS ODE.

Serene, benignant face!
Light of the human race,
So long by vapors of the earth obscured,
Rise on our later time
With love and power sublime,
To win the world with hope and faith assured.

As when the voice divine
On plains of Palestine
Gladened the shepherds when they watched by
night,
O fair Judean star,
Break through the cloudy bar,
Proclaim the grander glory of thy light!

The world has waited long
To hear the angelic song,
"Peace, peace upon the earth, good will to men,"
To see thy truth revealed,
By centuries concealed,
And life disclosed beyond our mortal ken.

Not as in days of old,
When dulled by fold on fold
Of error and of sin, the living word
Lay voiceless, tuneless, dead,
And thy lost sheep, unfed,
Strayed through the fields, their shepherd's voice
unheard.

Not as when pontiffs proud
No differing faith allowed,
Blind leaders on a path they never saw;
Or warring sects and creeds
Made dogmas, and not deeds
The witness of thy spirit and thy law.

But in a clearer time,
An ampler, freer clime,
Where science tunes the discords of the earth;
No shadow and no curse
Upon the universe,—
May all the nations rise to nobler birth!

Thus may thy beam divine
In broader sunlight shine,
One with the morning and all natural grace!
Still, 'mid the darkest night,
The way, the truth, the light,
Friend, guide, inspirer, of the human race!

—*Christopher P. Cranch.*

THE DIVINE IN THE HUMAN.

"In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). That is what Paul says of Christ. It is an amazing claim!

"Ye have an anointing [christing] from the Holy One, and know all things" (John ii. 20). That is what John says to those whom he salutes as children of God. It is an amazing claim!

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant" (Psalm xxv. 4). That is what a Hebrew sage said five hundred years before. It also was an amazing claim, but it explains both the others. And when a modern poet sings to you or to me,—

"God hid the whole world in thy heart,"—
can we misunderstand him? Are there not single sentences which affect us like focalized truth or like sun-rays collected in a burning-glass?

How could the early Christians see so

much in Jesus? Simply because they felt so much in themselves and interpreted his sonship by their own. So they went shouting through the world, "All things are ours: we are Christ's; Christ is God's!"

Men do not respond to music unless they have the musical sense. The moment a soul is in tune with heavenly harmonies, that soul vibrates in unison with them, easily believes that the universe is a vast symphony, and becomes not only a sharer, but an interpreter and utterer of songs that seem worthy of angels.

"He that is of God, he hath seen the Father."

This high outlook is well called the mount of vision. It is reached only by ascending; by leaving behind and below us much that is inferior; by accepting disciplines that purify while they elevate; perhaps by being perfected through suffering.

"By the thorn-road and none other

Is the mount of vision won:

Tread it without shrinking, brother;

Jesus trod it! press thou on!"

It must be that the creative Mind, the universal Life, is present and active everywhere and in all things; but this Presence can only be evident to those who share its illumination. As the Bible or any sacred utterance means little or nothing to those who are out of harmony with the Spirit that inspires, as the most glowing picture appears as a blur when not seen in the right light, so is any man's being obscure to himself till he is wide-awake and open-eyed. Even then, if he shuts his eyes again or drowns, or if his life is dulled by falseness or foulness, the vision fades, the light that was in him becomes darkness.

There must be more in us than yet appears. The whole future life of the tree—the plan of its structure, the quality of its foliage and fruit, and the scheme of all the possible trees that may spring from it—must be laid down in the seed from which it is to grow. Further, in each separate leaf is represented the whole life of the tree,—the vital energy that works in root and sap, in blossom and fruit. For the tree has but one life; and each leaf might say: "Through me know the tree. I and the tree are one."

We get a hint of immense resources of knowledge, power, and virtue stored potentially in the soul, or forever coming to the soul from the infinite and exhaustless Ful-

ness. It is like a rich inheritance belonging by right to the unconscious child, and into which he enters simply by growing. Are we not always in a process of "becoming"? Does not the whole creation "wait for the manifestation of the sons of God"?

Our feeble aspirations, our little faith, hope, and love, are the workings in us of the same creative power that draws the plant up from the seed and soil, that works in the egg to form a bird, which by and by shall soar and sing. So we read hopefully the sad story of human life in all its lower conditions and painful struggles, and we learn to believe that

"In even savage bosoms

There are longings, yearnings, strivings

For the good they comprehend not,—

That the feeble hands and helpless,

Groping blindly in the darkness,

Touch God's right hand in that darkness,

And are lifted up and strengthened."

Now let us reread the Scripture sayings already quoted. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of divine wisdom. The same wisdom is in those who share his anointing. The secrets of the Lord are shown to humble and reverent souls. These outbursts of noble enthusiasm seem extravagant only when we confine our view to present attainments and limitations. They are no longer extravagant when we count a thousand years as one day, or when our outlook is toward the infinite and eternal.

As we come into our true life, we realize more and more that we are enbosomed in the Perfect and Universal, that we are in open communication with the all-knowing Mind and the all-loving Heart. The Light that lighteth every man no longer shines in an uncomprehending darkness. If the scanty rays of sunlight that enter the little pupils of our eyes can give us fair and trustworthy pictures of earth and sky, why should we doubt that through our higher faculties we may have the vision of higher realities? Has not a marvellous light shined for us in the face of Jesus Christ, and in every other face or fact that we have really seen and rightly felt?

We need wonder no longer at the confidence of Jesus when he is reported as saying: "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things. All things are delivered unto me of my Father." If one

child of God has advanced further than ourselves along these shining paths that are laid out for all his children, and if we are travelling in the same direction, how can we help being his followers? As he cheerily calls back to those who are below and behind him, and bids them come on, why may they not joyfully salute him as their Leader and Example, the Prince of Life and Captain of Salvation?

To follow him is no servile imitation. We must be true to the Inward Light as he was, for it is the same light which shines for all. "See thou imitate no man, save in the matter of faithfulness," was the wise injunction of William Penn. The mind of Jesus opened inward and upward like a firmament, and a Face bent above him like a Father's approving smile. It is by the warrant of experience that he bids us ask and receive or seek and find the same unspeakable blessing.

"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Surely, we live in a universe where there is wisdom in plenty; and our need of it with our desire for it should persuade us that it is abundant, acceptable, and free.

That all truth, all reality, should be present to any man's thought at any moment is, of course, impossible; but, if we are in living communication with a boundless, all-including Intelligence, if in that Intelligence we live and move and have our being, if that Intelligence continually imparts as much as we are fitted to receive, let us lift up our heads and rejoice! For then we are heirs of all things; and nothing is hidden from us except by our own limitations, disorders, and obscurities.

Now we can understand the "authority" of Jesus. As he called men to purity of heart and rightness of life, to faith in the Fatherhood and love of the Brotherhood, the outward voice awoke the inward voice of reason and conscience. It was the voice of the Universal Soul resounding in the depths of the individual soul. Each man, like the prodigal, "came to himself," his real self,—knew his own mind, and felt as never before the greatness of his nature and his need of his duty and his privilege. The man before him was a spiritual looking-glass.

Does not the ministry of nature operate in the same way and preach the same gospel? Yes, but not till after the awakening, not till the spirit bears inward witness that we are sons of God. Then all things illustrate and confirm the truth. The order of the world, the processes around us, the testimonies of history and science, open like parables. They, too, speak with authority; and we learn to pray with Bryant,—

"To the beautiful order of Thy works
May we conform the order of our lives!"

So with the impressions made on a wakeful mind by human relationships and social exposures. All sweet and reasonable persons shame or will us to be like them, as if God were touching and beckoning us. All unbeautiful lives become warnings. Living in a human world, we are really immersed in a spiritual atmosphere. The stimulus and opportunity to practise justice, kindness, and helpful service is the beginning of heaven. Does not a child best find its own faculties and forces in the companionship of other children? So do we grown-ups find in living worthily together our lifelong divine education. For the play of light around and within us is all one thing. It is the method of nature and of Providence,—the Father's way of bringing up his family.

Why do we not take these things for granted? We trust the air to be the breath of our life; we trust the seasons to lead the seed-time on to harvest; we even trust the methods by which human skill brings water into our houses, gives artificial light when the sun goes down, and harnesses the electric current to our wheels. Why should we not trust the Power behind and within the powers,—the Power which makes, not only for righteousness, but for health and sanity, for guidance and comfort, for beauty and gladness?

What account can we give of this mighty experience? Men have called it "God manifest in flesh," "Christ formed in us the hope of glory," "the witness of the Holy Spirit." Let us confess that no name or word can hold the fact; that no creed or philosophy can be more than a finger pointing to the immeasurable sky.

"The letter fails, the systems fall,
And every symbol wanes."

The Divine in the Human, the opening of

the mind of man to the Mind of God! Of all the blessed wonders of our faith, this is the most impressive and inspiring; the most fruitful of impulses that do not exhaust, of restraints that never grow irksome, of repose that continually refreshes and renews, of love that casts out fear, of peace that passes understanding. "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart." Look and listen. Be quiet and teachable. Be trustful and be true. "Love, and you will know."

"As shines a star in the deep sea,
So shines the thought of God in me;
It lights my eye, and I behold
What sages saw and prophets told."

—Charles G. Ames.

THE STILL HOUR.

CHRISTMAS.

Christ's birthday! soft come floating down
The manger songs from bygone years,
Till earth's white robe new glory wears,
And brightly in her shining crown
Each lonely star a guide appears.

The manger songs! Oh, sweet the lays
Each mother's loving lips have sung
'Neath cottage roof and palace dome!
Like warbling birds in spring's first days,
Back to the aged heart they come.

And softly on the listening ear
Do angel voices carol still,
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,"
As on the wild Judean hill;
And waiting spirits breathe, "Amen."

Our birthday! if we wake to life,
The life that ever moveth on,
That knows no change of time or death,
But like a calm stream, 'mid earth's strife,
Mirrors the heavens it looks upon.
—Lydia Very.

We see that Jesus has just what we long for,—a living, ever-present consciousness of God. We see that sense of divine companionship enveloping his whole life, and vitalizing every part of it.—*Scougal*.

We do not go to heaven, but heaven comes to us. They whose inner eye is opened to see heaven, and they who see it, are in it; and the air to them is thick with angels, like the background of Raphael's "Mother in Glory."—*F. H. Hedge*.

To have the feeling of being the affectionate and obedient child of God made alive in any human heart is a good. It is the *one good* of life. It is so vast and deep and wide and beautiful and comforting and satisfying a good that no other deserves to be mentioned in comparison.—*T. L. Huntington*.

Worship is the free offering of ourselves to God; ever renewed, because ever imperfect. It expresses the consciousness that we are his by right, yet have not duly passed into his hand; that the soul has no true rest but in him, yet has wandered in strange flights till its wing is tired. It is our effort to return home, the surrender again of our narrow self-will, our prayer to be merged in a life diviner than our own.—*Martineau*.

This it is that gives a majesty so pure and touching to the historic figure of Christ. Self-abandonment to God, uttermost surrender without reserve or stipulation to the guidance of the Holy Spirit from the soul of souls, pause in no darkness, hesitation in no perplexity, recoil in no extremity of anguish, but a gentle, unfaltering hold of the invisible hand of the only Holy and All-good,—these are the features that have made Jesus of Nazareth the dearest and most sacred image to the heart of so many ages.—*Martineau*.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?
(Miss) Cora A. Tilden, Box 45, Milton, Mass., offers the following music:—

Instrumental.

"Remembrance Waltz," by R. D. Marshall; "La Cigale Polka"; "Song of Marguerite"; "Flashlight Schottische"; "Ma Ragtime Baby" (two-step); "Admiral Dewey's March"; "The Lyndon Polka"; "Little Pickaninnies"; "Lynn Cadet March"; "The Hamilton" (two-step).

Vocal.

"Ma Dusky Sue"; "Three Little Chestnuts"; "Only one Girl in the World for Me"; "My Heart is o'er the Sea"; "This Little Pig went to Market"; "Pensacola Pickaninny"; "Mammy's Little Baby Coon."

Miss Lillian S. Allen, 56 Devon Street, Roxbury, Mass., offers the following:—

Warren's "Primary Geography"; Monroe's "Geography"; "Introductory Geography"; Franklin's "Arithmetic"; "Fourth and Fifth Reader"; "Music Reader."

The following books are offered by First Church Branch, Salem. Address Miss Alice D. Perkins, 5 Oliver Street, Salem, Mass. Harkness's "Latin Reader"; Allen's "Latin Reader"; Andrews's "Latin Reader"; Cæsar's "Gallic War"; "Second Reader"; Tarbell's "Lessons in Language, Book I."; "Picturesque Geographical Reader, First Book"; *Appleton's Journal*, 1869–1870; *Outlook*, 1898–1899–1900.

REQUESTS.

[Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

Miss Maud Dawes, Beaver, Wyoming, writes: "I would be so glad to receive literature for our struggling little Sunday-school.

"I, who am superintendent, would like anything that will help me in the work."

I am a poor girl with no one to look to for support but my mother. I will be glad of any reading or school books for myself and little brother and sister. Will pass on after reading to others. Miss Carrie Hall, Dobyons, Patrick County, Virginia.

I am a poor public school-teacher in the country among poor people, some of whom are scarcely able to buy text-books for their children; and there is no public library. We suffer very much for supplementary reading and help books. My object in wishing to join your society is the hope of receiving a few books for the use of the children. This will be a help to me as well, for it will make the drudgery of teaching an ungraded school lighter.

There are also a few books for teachers I need: "The Hiawatha Primer," "Mother Nature's Stories," "The Finch First Reader," "The Good Time Primer," Frye's "Elements of Geography," Lewis's "First Book in Writing English," Hart's "Composition and Rhetoric," Painter's "Introduction to American Literature," White's "Elements of Pedagogy," White's "School Management," "Elementary Book on Astronomy." Any of these will be gratefully received. Miss Lucy Harris, Hebron, Virginia.

Miss D. D. Dunlop, 54 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Roxbury, Mass., asks for a small Concordance.

I write to thank you for the reading that has been sent me through The Cheerful Letter Exchange. I will be glad of any more that you will send me. My address is changed from Verano, Virginia, to Nettle Ridge, Patrick County, Virginia. Mrs. Henry Nelson.

Mr. L. H. Kirby, Lenoir, North Carolina, will be glad of any reading.

Youth's Companion is asked for by Mrs. Colonel Johnson, Norton, Kansas.

My dear Mrs. Nichols,— Please say to the good Cheerful Letter friends that after suffering for weeks with a carbuncle I was just getting able to ride out when I had an accident on October 1, which I very much fear has lamed me for life. I am now able to sit up on the side of my bed, but cannot walk one step even with crutches. I ask the friends to remember me in prayer, and will be glad to get letters while not able to read literature. (Mrs.) H. C. Martin, Heareford, North Carolina.

Frank J. Hand's address is changed from Windfall, New York, to The General Hospital, Fort Bayard, New Mexico.

Dear Cheerful Letter Readers,—Am still a shut-in, and wish to thank you all who responded so cheerily to the two fatherless "Hattie and Charlie." They were so happy. This time will you kindly remember my own little boy of seven years, who is likewise situated? Has had no papa for two years. I have a daughter of twenty who would be very grateful for current literature, and we could both enjoy the same. She has suffered much for the past year with a complication of complaints. The "Happy Holiday" time is almost a name with us. I will acknowledge whatever is received. Mrs. C. E. Terry, Box 31, Speonk, N. Y.

THE MOTHERS' CLUB.

[Contributions for this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

ABOUT SANTA CLAUS.

"Is it right to teach our children deception by telling them of Santa Claus?" The question comes from conscientious parents, who fear to make a mistake, and hesitate to stir a single step from the straight and narrow path of the literal truth. They fancy that when the inevitable day of the opened eye arrives, and the children lose the sense of the lovely fairy tale which was so enchanting to them in the early years, their reverence for truth will be lowered, and their confidence in the declarations of father and mother diminished. "Is it not better," writes an anxious mother, "that my little girl shall be aware that I fill her stocking, that Aunt Carrie brought her the big doll from Paris, and that papa gave her the bright gold piece? Why keep up the belief in a mere myth,—a belief which will one day be torn to shreds in the chilly daylight of life?" I sympathize with my questioner, and I understand her point of view; but mine is altogether opposed to hers. That "chilly daylight of life" never comes, stark, bare, and blighting, whatever the stress of adversity, to souls which possess the imaginative faculty in rich development. I can conceive few greater blunders in child-training than the suppression of the imagination. Deliberately to restrain its growth and forbid its expression is to cripple the bird's wings, and condemn it to keep near the ground, when it has a God-given capacity for flight across the blue expanse above us.

In the beautiful beginnings of life, when the child is in a world of surprises and rare unfoldings, imagination is active, and its operations are vital and marvel-working. "Come, and let us make believe!" cry the children; and the bit of green lawn before the door becomes a tented field, the plain little home a palace, the mended clothes and simple bread and butter, royal robes and queenly fare. No modern novelist has better described this phase of childhood than Barrie, in "Sentimental Tommy," though one sees the seamy side of the cloth later on, in the too self-indulgent moods of Tommy's manhood. Tommy, however, is an extreme example, and has the eccentricity of genius to contend with,—a burden from which most of us are free. Jean Ingelow, in her "Off the Skelligs," shows a group of children beguiling their playtime in an unreal world; and I have only to recall the bright days of my own childhood to remember how for years my sister and I had in our world of day dreams a safe retreat from every transient woe.

Hans Andersen called imagination "a leaf from the sky." The faith faculty of maturity is largely the outgrowth of a too intense literalism. Imagination is vision. Though we may not see so clearly and so far, let us not throw cold glances on the discoveries of those whose eyes have fuller sight.

Not only would I teach a child to believe in Santa Claus, but I would keep on believing in him myself till the lights burn low and the curtain falls. After all, removing the pretty properties of the familiar stage, the reindeer, the laden sleigh, the shaggy graybeard with the twinkling eyes, the rosy cheeks, and the coat of furs, getting rid of the time-honored machinery which bit by bit we accept as part of the loveliest play in the world, what remains of the masquerade? Just this. A spirit of universal good will, a sweet, beneficent, all-embracing spirit of love, is abroad at Christmas-tide; and his mission and his message are to make everybody unspeakably happy. Under his reign each person is trying not only to bestow a gift on another, but to do it with the sweet secrecy and divine reserve which forbid the left hand to know what the right hand does. The tender mystery of Christmas, its legend

of myth, and its air of elfland drawing nearer day by day, are ennobling. Do not let us rob childhood of this lovely opportunity to "follow the gleam." In plain honesty of purpose, in sincerity of truthfulness, Santa Claus, dear old saint, simply brings into the home each year a new era of good will all around; and, when children gradually find out, as they do, that he had no tangible existence as a man, they accept him the more intelligently as an angel.

But what shall we say?

If asked a direct question and conscientiously unable to answer in the affirmative, I would counsel the mother to speak what to her seems the truth. Nothing is a more fatal wrong to a child than to be met by evasion or falsehood at any point of its spiritual progress. To elevate a child, the parent must be on a high plane. Indeed, one must live on a high plane to reach the habitual attitude of many children. If you feel in your heart that you can say only this, say: "My child, the folk-lore of the world is made up of beautiful fables, and this is one. Fables are the wrappings around real things. Your father and mother, your brothers and sisters, give you the Christmas presents and fill your stockings; and you, too, are a little Santa Claus when you save your pocket money and give presents to them. Santa Claus is just a name for Christmas fun and sweetness and love, and what you do not now comprehend about it you will learn by and by."—*Margaret E. Sangster, in "Good Housekeeping."*

THE MOTHER AND HER BOYS.

(Concluded.)

Important, however, as all these qualities I have spoken of are, I cannot regard a mother as having fulfilled her part unless she has done something to bring out that which is the crowning element in character, —I mean *Religion*.

Here, again, we have to go back, as in self-control, to that idea that she herself must *guide* at first, and so gradually develop in the child the power of *self-guidance*. At first the child cannot conceive of any power or care greater than its parents'. He does not see the necessity of asking for the care of a heavenly Father.

It is not dependence that is first taught,

but wonder and reverence. This is the most natural order of development. The child-mind seems peculiarly fitted to receive and enjoy impressions of wonder and reverence. Without set lessons or taxing the memory, gradually the mind is led on from the wonder and beauty in Nature, in the stars and flowers and insects, in sunshine and storms,—on to something greater than these, to something greater and more powerful than father or mother, some being on whom *they* in turn depend. There is something in the very nature of children that readily receives the belief in a very real relation between a Supreme Being and themselves, long before they can have any set instruction from the Bible. The religious nature, which I believe to be as natural as any other element of mind, may and should be developed at first *without Bible or Testament*. Afterward all the helps from devout, religious, God-loving men and women in all ages, and even of all nations, will be recognized and valued. But the whole, to be firm and permanent, must be based upon an *inward, gradually developed* consciousness, which will be independent of creeds or doctrines or evidences, and which, if once it is naturally brought out, cannot be utterly swept away by the tempest of scepticism and unbelief by which it will at times be assailed. So much a mother owes to her child, so much I believe its nature demands and is adapted to receive. I should not like to close, however, without a word about teaching little children to pray. I think it is a good thing for the mother to write a simple little prayer for her children to learn by heart,—not, however, as something to be kept rigidly to: the child should be encouraged himself to add something to it in his own way, on special occasions of thankfulness or trouble. And, especially with boys, I would do everything I could to help and encourage them to overcome their dislike to kneeling down before getting into bed when among strange boys or when away from home. I do not believe that boys are naturally less religious than girls, but I do think that they are more afraid of being laughed at; and, more than all, they fear being thought soft or emotional, and they think it looks so if they say their prayers regularly as little boys and girls do at home. Teach them that this fear is a weakness in itself, and shows a lack of the

highest courage that a man can wish for,—moral courage. In this, however, as in all other matters I have spoken of, I do not attempt to lay down any detailed rules, but only to show the spirit and direction of these early efforts, which rest so entirely upon the mother, and which really give the bias to the whole after-education.

In close connection with this religious teaching at home is the matter of taking little children to church. I do not need to say anything about the Sunday-school, because children are generally ready enough for that; but I do not think that any Sunday-school can take the place of the church, any more than the Sunday-school teacher can relieve the mother of her own responsibility for religious training at home. Every mother who believes in public worship, and feels the benefit of it herself, would like her boys to grow up good church-goers and church-supporters. If they are to do this, she must begin early to take them with her. I think from five years old children may begin to go occasionally as a treat; and, by the time they are seven or eight, church-going should have come to be looked upon as one of the regular institutions of the family,—a matter of course as much as regularity at meals or bed-time. To form this regular church-going habit while children are young requires great tact and patience, and a mother has to exercise her unselfishness as much here as elsewhere. She will not, perhaps, be able to keep her whole attention on the service, or feel the time so restful to herself as if the children were all left at home with a servant; but I never see a mother at church, Sunday after Sunday, without her children, without wondering rather sadly how they are spending the Sunday morning. There is not much trouble at first. Children love to do what they see their parents and all grown-up people do, and to be with them. For the first few times the novelty and seriousness may awe them, and they will very likely behave very well; but as this wears off, and they feel more at home in the pew, they will be apt to grow restless and talkative. Watchfulness and tact, however, will do a great deal in keeping them quiet. Let the little one have a book, or a pencil and scrap of paper: this, with a good nap, will help along the sermon. Many a time I have listened

to the sermon with a little child leaning up against me on each side. But even from the beginning there are some things the children can enter into. There is always the singing; and they like to look over the hymn with father or mother long before they can read, and gradually they find that they know some of the words. Later on, again, if they are encouraged to listen, they will startle you some Sunday by saying, as one of my little boys did, "Mother, I do believe I understood a little bit of the sermon to-day." Insist upon one thing only,—no talking, perfect silence and quietness: this one lesson in self-control will be as good as a sermon. As soon as a child knows that quietness has to be, it is wonderful how much it will find to interest both eyes and ears. Children are very quick observers: they will soon notice when parents and older people who are about them are reverent in their behavior. When they see that they join devoutly in prayer and hymn, they will have impressions made upon them which they will carry with them all through their lives; they will begin to have some realization of what is meant by religion, and by worshipping in "spirit and in truth."

I cannot better close what I have to say than in the following wise words of John Locke: "The business of education, in respect of knowledge, is not to perfect a learner in all or any one of the sciences, but to give his mind that disposition and those habits that may enable him to attain any part of knowledge he shall stand in need of in the future course of his life."

—Mrs. Brooke Herford.

NATURAL HISTORY.

SNAILS.

My young friends have probably heard the expression, "As slow as a snail." I do not think that gives a very correct idea of the animal, as I have known one to disappear from sight almost as soon as the eyes were turned away from him. I think, from my experience of them for some years, that they vary in this respect, and in others, much as people do. The snails which I am about to describe live in shells, from which they cannot be separated while they live.

If the shell is seriously injured, the snail must die.

They have a foot which comes out at the back of the shell, and two horns, or, as they are properly called, "tentacles"; and it is by means of these that they make their way about. These tentacles extend out on each side of the head, with a little black dot at the extremity of each. These are called the eyes, but do not appear to be very useful.

The tentacles are elastic, like rubber cord, can be drawn out to a great extent when they are moving about; but, when they are eating, or, as we may imagine, sleeping, they are shortened, and seem to lie almost inactive, and often, especially if they are touched, they vanish entirely.

There is a pair of tentacles below these which are fixed, and of which I do not know the use. Below the lower pair of tentacles is the mouth, which is very rarely seen,—never except while they are eating; and then sometimes you can see the tongue, which is very red. They have a great number of teeth, which are very sharp, and can often be heard when they are eating lettuce, of which they are very fond.

A favorite food of all the species I have known is a simple paste made by stirring flour and water together. They lay eggs which are about the size and appearance of homœopathic globules; and the baby snails come out of their eggs with the shells all formed and very pretty, and they crawl about much more quickly than their parents. One summer I raised sixteen; but they did not live long, probably because they required the outdoor air.

Now that I have given you a general description of the snails, perhaps you may be interested to hear some little incidents connected with them. I will add that my family, at different times, has included natives of France, Fayal in the Azores, Japan, Massachusetts, Vermont, and the Adirondack Mountains. My first experience worth relating was connected with a box sent me from these mountains. It arrived at night; and I deferred opening it until morning, placing it, tied up carefully as it was, on my bureau. A window in my chamber was open, as it was a warm night; and the blinds were closed. The next morning my attention was called to a snail on the fence back of the house, fastened on, as is their habit, by a sort of mucilage proceeding from their bodies, which answers the

purpose of glue. Notwithstanding his long journey of the day before, he had gnawed his way through the pasteboard box which contained him, made his escape through the blinds and around two sides of the house. He was named Weston, in memory of a traveller who made long journeys on foot; but he lived but a short time. So I think he probably exceeded his strength. One day one of my snails fell from the window where he had been crawling, and broke a piece out of his shell.

The poor creature, when I picked him up, had drawn into his shell as far as he could, as if he were troubled. The next day I saw him putting his head out, not through the usual opening, but through the hole which had been made. This I thought very curious. I offered him some food; but he refused to eat it, and remained just about half-way out. This continued for several days, when I observed that something like threads appeared to be drawn across the hole; and, whenever I looked, I saw that they increased in number. After a while I saw that they were drawn across in an opposite direction, as cloth is woven. He continued his work, never relaxing his diligence, nor allowing himself to take any food, for about four weeks. At the end of that time the work was completed. The shell was mended so nearly that, but for a little lighter color, you would not have known the difference; and the snail, apparently proud of his skill, extended himself to the full length, so far as he was able, and crawled around as if to exhibit himself, partaking, too, of an abundant meal after his long fast. They probably have a quantity of this glutinous substance about them, which enables them to repair their shells; and we cannot but look upon it as one instance of the kind provision which our Father makes for the very lowest of his creatures. One very warm evening in May, when I was the owner of only one snail, I had opened a window and removed the cover of his dish to give the poor animal a little air. I was called downstairs in haste to a visitor; and one and another followed, so that I must confess I entirely forgot my pet. As soon as I returned to my chamber, I remembered my carelessness, and felt that he had probably availed himself of the opportunity for escape. A thorough search was made the next day in

the chamber, and many times afterward, and, so far as could be, out of doors, but with a very faint hope of success. At length, I was obliged to give up all expectation of my poor snail's return; and the feeling of regret was much more painful, as you children may have experienced, because it was owing to my *own neglect*, and through that I had exposed the poor little innocent animal to suffer perhaps for food and shelter. Some weeks later I went into the country, and remained three months. The second day after my return home I put my hand on a rocking-chair to sit down, and touched a *snail*, and, on looking, found it was that very one; for his shell was peculiar.

Being desirous to know if he was not in want of food, I prepared some flour paste, about the quantity which was sufficient for four or five.

At first he went all around the dish, just touching the edge. After a while he dipped in a little farther. In about an hour the dish was emptied. From this I judged he had not tasted food for a long time; and this is a lesson to us, when we have fasted for some time from any cause, to begin moderately to satisfy our hunger, which the snail's *instinct* taught him to do.

I would add that snails are very harmless creatures, and very social among themselves.

I had one alone, which withdrew into his shell most of the time, and could hardly be induced to take any food, so that I thought he would die; but, when he had a companion, his shyness was overcome, and he appeared just like the others. I have given you these facts, dear children, to show you that the most insignificant creature may be found, on examination, an object of interest, and teach us lessons of God's wisdom and power.—*M. P. Dabney*, in "*Little Unity*."

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Contributions to this column may be sent to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.]

I.

A duck before two ducks, a duck behind two ducks, and a duck between two ducks. How many ducks were there in all?

II.

My first is a kind of butter.
My second is a kind of charger.
My whole is part of a gun.

III.

I am composed of twenty-five letters.
My 3, 22, 7, 20, 14, is a small fruit.
My 5, 15, 19, 11, 24, is an aromatic plant.
My 7, 9, 18, 8, 1, is a blacksmith's tool.
My 14, 12, 6, 1, 16, is a rapacious bird.
My 18, 24, 9, 21, 10, is a planet.
My 20, 17, 22, 2, 23, is a European city.
My 25, 4, 12, 22, 13, is a voracious fish.
My whole is a proverb.

IV.

I went into the woods and got it. I sat down to look for it,—the more I looked for it, the less I liked it,—and, not being able to find it, came away without it.

V.

I'm a useful little body;
And, if you would know my name,
You must listen to my story,
Then I think you'll guess the same.

I am seen in church quite often,
And in preaching take a part.
I am never heard in sighing,
Though I'm always down in heart.

I am never heard in laughing,
Yet I'm never seen in tears;
But, wherever you find friendship,
There my form in full appears

I'm a busy little body,
First in here and then in there;
And, now you've heard my story,
You may look in anywhere.

Conundrums.

1. Why is it that you and I must never dine together?
2. When does the plebeian rise to the patrician?
3. What coat is finished without buttons and is put on wet?

Answers to Puzzles in November Number.

I.

Numerical Enigma.

Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right,—but our country, right or wrong!

II.

Charade.

Keepsake.

III.

Buried Quadrupeds.

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. Alpaca. | 4. Ermine. |
| 2. Beaver. | 5. Tapir. |
| 3. Bison. | 6. Jackal. |

IV.

Defective Proverb.

"The load becomes light that is cheerfully borne."

V.

Anagrams.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Overcoats. | 4. Waistcoat. |
| 2. Pantaloons. | 5. Newmarkets. |
| 3. Trousers. | 6. Polonaise. |
| 7. Raglan. | |

VI.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Waver—aver. | 4. Bother—other. |
| 2. Mother—other. | 5. Maid—aid. |
| 3. Jaunt—Aunt. | 6. Cover—over. |

VII.

Because it is the fall of Turkey, the overthrow of Greece, the ruin of Africa, and the breaking up of China.

Conundrums.

1. One was made of wood, and the other Maid of Orleans.
2. Wheelbarrow.
3. Because, though first in pity he is always the last in help.

The answer to the puzzle in the October number entitled "What am I?"—is yardstick.

THINK BEFORE YOU STRIKE.

I remember reading in my boyhood about a merchant travelling on horseback, accompanied by his dog. He dismounted for some purpose, and accidentally dropped his package of money. The dog saw it, the merchant did not. The dog barked to stop him, and, as he rode further, bounded in front of the horse, and barked louder and longer. The merchant thought he had gone mad, drew a pistol from his holster, and shot him. The wounded dog crawled back

to the package; and, when the merchant discovered his loss and rode back, he found his dog dying there, guarding the treasure.

The following little story, told by a friend of mine, is not as painful, but adds force to the thought, "Think before you strike any creature that cannot speak":—

"When I was a boy, and lived up in the mountains of New Hampshire, I worked for a farmer, and was given a span of horses to plough with, one of which was a four-year-old colt. The colt, after walking a few steps, would lie down in the furrow. The farmer was provoked, and told me to sit on the colt's head to keep him from rising, while he whipped him, 'to break him of that notion,' as he said.

"But just then a neighbor came by. He said, 'There's something wrong here: let him get up, and let us examine.' He patted the colt, looked at his harness, and then said, 'Look at this collar: it is so long and narrow, and carries the harness so high, that, when he begins to pull, it slips back, and chokes him, so he can't breathe.' And so it was; and but for that neighbor we should have whipped as kind a creature as we had on the farm, because he lay down when he could not breathe."

It was only the other day I heard of a valuable St. Bernard dog being shot because, having a wound on his head concealed by the hair, he bit a person who handled him roughly.

Boys, young and old, please remember that these creatures are dumb. They may be hungry or thirsty or cold or faint or sick or bruised or wounded, and cannot tell you. Think before you strike any creature that cannot speak.—George T. Angell.

FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA, NOV. 13, 1901.

Some one has kindly sent me *The Cheerful Letter* for some time past. I shall move to Winfield, Kansas, next week, which will be our future home. Will be glad to have *The Cheerful Letter* follow me there, should you think best to send it.

The Cheerful Letter represents what you are doing in a very excellent way. I bid you God-speed.

Yours sincerely,

B. C. HAMMOND,
Chaplain U.S. Army.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Miss Margaret Hamil, Mynard, Alabama, to Remus, Georgia.

Mrs. T. S. Beard, Rough Creek, Virginia, to Tolar, Charlotte County, Virginia.

Do well the little things now: so shall great things come to thee by and by, asking to be done.—*Persian Proverb.*

One is so apt to think that what works smoothest works to the highest ends, having no patience for the results of friction.—*Jackanapes.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER
EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The address of our treasurer for the winter months is Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass.

Please send requests for reading matter to the Book Club Secretary, not to the Editor.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, January 6, at 25 Beacon Street, 10.30 A.M. All interested in this work, whether members or not, are cordially invited.

The editor thanks cordially the friend who sent her the numbers of *The Cheerful Letter*. She would be very glad to receive one or two more copies of November, 1895 and 1896. Address directly Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

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TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.